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621 both districts for a period of five years from the coming into 648 force of the Treaty.

621 The Treaty and the new régime were received with approval by a number of the Druzes and Alawis; even former 664 autonomists expressed their loyalty to the Syrian Government. 186 This reaction, however, was transient and deceptive. In Jebel Druze discord began to arise early in 1937, after the appointment of Nasib al-Bakri, a Damascene Moslem, as first Governor of the province. A powerful party demanded the appointment of a Druze notable, Hasan al-Atrash, and also a large measure of autonomy; the nationalists asserted that it was encouraged to go to extremes by local French officials. There were also, however, many Druzes who supported the nationalist Government and the Governor whom it had appointed. Attempts were made with no more than a temporary success to reconcile the advocates of separatism with those of unity. The disturbances were not ended until the Governor resigned and was replaced after an interval by Hasan al-Atrash. By the end of 1937 the Jebel was quiet enough to enable Parliamentary elections to be held. The calm continued throughout 1938, but at the beginning of 1939 [667] disturbances began once more. The separatist group accused the Syrian Government of bad faith, expelled Syrian officials from the province and declared the independence of Jebel Druze under the protection of France.

A similar process had meanwhile been occurring in the Alawi district, which was known under the new régime as the Province of Latakia. Here, as in Jebel Druze, there was tranquillity at first, and Parliamentary elections were held in 1937. But the calm was short-lived. The Alawi notables protested against the appointment of Syrian Moslem officials, and more especially of nationalist Governors, first Mazhar Raslan from Homs and then Ihsan al-Jabiri, a Sunni Moslem from Aleppo. The nationalist policy of assimilation was perhaps carried out hastily and tactlessly, the Governor alienated large sections of the population, and at the beginning of 1939 armed bands rose in revolt under the leadership of the deputy Sulaiman Murshid, a brigand who had proclaimed himself 'God' and had secured considerable local influence with the help of certain French officials. At about the same time the visit of the High Commissioner, M. Puaux, was made the occasion for demonstrations in favour of autonomy. Soon

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afterwards the Governor found his position impossible and was compelled to abandon it. He was not replaced, his powers being assumed in July by the High Commissioner's Delegate.

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The Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936 effected no formal change in the status of the Jazirah, but its signature was followed by the replacement of the French officials who had ruled it until then, by Syrian administrators. Here as in Jebel Druze and the Alawi region discontent soon showed itself. There were some who felt and expressed loyalty to the new national Government. But there was an important element which demanded that the ties between the Jazirah and the central Government in Damascus should be as loose as possible, or should be severed altogether. Their minimum demand was that the local officials should be chosen from among the local population; their maximum, for complete separation from Syria. Their discontent was increased by the lack of wisdom shown by some of the more irresponsible nationalists, although the Government itself acted on the whole in a conciliatory manner. The autonomists appear to have been encouraged by certain of the local French officials; the nationalists claimed, indeed, that here as among the Alawis and Druzes the minorities would have acquiesced in their rule had it not been for the activities of French agents. The separatists were themselves divided on everything except their dislike of being ruled by the nationalists of Damascus. Some were Kurds, who objected mainly to being ruled by Arabs; others Christians, who objected also to being ruled by Moslems. These two groups sometimes but not always acted together during the years from 1936 to 1939.

Serious trouble first broke out in June, 1937, when the Kurds of Hassetche revolted against the appointment of nationalist officials from outside the Jazirah. The rising was quelled with the aid of the French military authorities, but it was soon taken up in Qamishli and elsewhere by the Christians, who demanded a special statute similar to that of Alexandretta, an administration which would give equal weight to the rights of all sects and races, and the withdrawal from the province of officials who had not been chosen from the local population.

At the beginning of 1941 the unrest which had been for so long latent came to a head. Strikes and demonstrations began in the Syrian towns in February, in protest against the dearth of essential foodstuffs and the failure of the authorities to stop profiteering. They very soon turned into political disturbances, directed by a number of nationalist committees and leaders, and above all by Shukri al-Quwatli, who in March issued a manifesto setting forth their objectives. He condemned the existing Government of Bahij al-Khatib as a group of men whose sentiments were not those of the population; he declared that the legal basis of French rule no longer existed since the League of Nations had ceased to function; and he therefore demanded the immediate formation of a national Government. Shortly afterwards, in consequence of the continuation of the disturbances, which indeed spread for a few days from Syria to the towns of the Lebanese coast, the Government of Bahij al-Khatib resigned. There was a temporary cessation of unrest while the High Commissioner negotiated with Shukri al-Quwatli and others for the formation of a more representative Government; but disturbances broke out once more after the failure of the negotiations.

The recrudescence of the troubles appears to have convinced General Dentz of the necessity of making further concessions. At the beginning of April he broadcast a statement to the Syrian people, setting forth the conclusions to which his conversations with Syrian leaders had led him. First, the independence of Syria remained the aim towards which the Syrians were striving; France was in agreement with this, but the present international situation made it impossible to contemplate a definitive settlement of the problem of the form of government in Syria. Secondly, Syrian public opinion was demanding the establishment of a Government endowed with wider powers. Thirdly, there was a need for an economic and social programme which would help to solve the problems of unemployment, the food supply, agriculture and commerce. In the light of these conclusions the High Commissioner had decided upon the following measures: the replacement of the Council of Directors by a 'Head of the Government'; the formation of an Advisory Assembly, to be composed of representatives of the political, cultural and economic life of the country and of the younger generation, and in which the Druzes and Alawis would also be represented